



# Sense and Sensibility

# Sense and Sensibility

by a Lady

*"It is not what we think or feel that makes us who we are.  
It is what we do. Or fail to do..."*

**Summary:** The sisters **Elinor Dashwood** and **Marianne Dashwood** are a study in contrast: Elinor is practical and reserved about her emotions, always thinking ahead. Marianne is romantic, impassioned and holds honesty above all else let the consequences be damned. The Dashwood family falls upon hard times when the father dies and his heir John Dashwood, half-brother to the sisters, gives them very little to live on at the encouragement of his mercenary wife Fanny Dashwood. Elinor falls in love with Fanny's eldest brother, the quiet, intelligent **Edward Ferrars**. After barriers appear in this suit, Elinor supports her extremely emotional sister and mother Mrs. Dashwood as they move to the small Barton Cottage on a generous distant cousin's estate, Sir John Middleton. Marianne is admired by the dependable but (to her mind) boring **Colonel Brandon**, as well as the dashing, romantic Mr. Willoughby. The sisters suffer due to many secrets revealed on the way to surprising happinesses.

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How to use this book: Read the paragraphs out loud.

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- Those marked "Scene" are to be acted out by the group.
- Characters whose names are bolded appear in the scene. Supporting cast are played by GM or Jane Austen's player.
- Those paragraphs in *italics* help set the stage for later scenes.
- Special scenes occur occasionally - *Jane's life, Hunt/Parlor and Dance*.
- Jane Austen's player will join this novel during Act 1.

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SUPPORTING CAST

**Mrs. Dashwood** - Elinor and Marianne's mother. She is a caring, emotional woman, much like her middle daughter, Marianne in temperament. She values her daughters comfort and safety but is relies on Elinor for help to navigate through the practicalities.

**Margaret Dashwood** - the youngest sister of Elinor and Marianne. Friendly and adventurous.

**John Dashwood** - half brother of the Dashwood girls, he inherited their home after their father's death due to primogeniture of the estate. Gave his sisters very little due to the guidance of his uncharitable wife, and his own weak will.

**Fanny Dashwood** - the wife of John Dashwood and sister in law to the Dashwood girls. Focused on providing the most for her own flesh and blood, she steers her brother away from the Dashwoods when she sees how close Edward and Elinor become.

**John Willoughby** - a dashing, charming man the Dashwood sisters meet. His poetic soul resonates with Marianne Dashwood and soon everyone things they are engaged. However, although Willoughby stands to inherit property, he is vulnerable and his choice of marriage is determined by finances and logic, not the heart.

**Lucy Steele** - a young woman in the acquaintance of Edward Ferrars. Unbeknownst to everyone, they have been secretly engaged for some time. She learns of Edward's esteem for Elinor and does all she can to stake her claim to him.

## **SCENES FROM JANE AUSTEN'S LIFE**

### **ACT 1**

**(With Jane Austen)**

*After the death of their husband and father, the Dashwood Ladies await the arrival of John Dashwood and his wife Fanny. They become guests in what had been their own house.*

Scene:

**Edward Ferrars**, Fanny Dashwood's brother, visits. **Elinor Dashwood** and Edward talk about their plans for the future: Elinor to set her family up in a small cottage they can afford, Edward to become a clergyman. **Marianne Dashwood** enters, pleased to

see them talking. **Fanny and John Dashwood** enter. Fanny is not happy to see Elinor becoming close to her brother and tells them they must leave soon. When consulted, their half-brother John agrees with his wife.

*A distant cousin offers the Dashwood ladies a cottage they can rent inexpensively. They leave as soon as they can, asking Edward to visit. He is sad to see them go, but is non-committal.*

Scene:

Settling in to their new home, **Marianne, Elinor, Margaret** and **Mrs. Dashwood** are greeted by their neighbor, **Colonel Brandon**. He is taken with Marianne. She is cool to him.

*Taking a walk on a rainy day, Marianne hurts her ankle and is rescued by a dashing stranger, Mr. Willoughby. They meet again and form a fast friendship, reading poetry and spending much time together.*

Scene:

**Marianne and Willoughby** are together at the Cottage. **Elinor and Mrs. Dashwood** chat about whether Edward will visit them. **Col. Brandon** comes to visit He greets them warmly and wants to see Marianne, but leaves abruptly after seeing Willoughby is there.

## HUNTING & PARLOR INTERLUDE

When you finish your scenes, gentlemen join the others to go hunting. Ladies to sew in the parlor. Mingle with characters from the other books and Jane Austen.

**Men:** write down what you've hunted to contribute to the feast for the dances, write down the feelings you cannot share.

**Women:** write down what you are making for other character's trousseaus, write down the feelings you cannot share.

# ACT 2

Scene:

**Edward** visits with **Elinor, Marianne, Mrs. Dashwood and Margaret**. They are excited to see him. He is sad and distant. He and Elinor are left alone and he seems to want to tell her something, but does not.

*After his visit, they learn of Edward's engagement to a young woman named Lucy Steele.*

*Mr. Willoughby takes leave of Marianne suddenly. He asks her for a lock of her hair. She mourns his absence.*

Scene:

Visiting the cottage, **Colonel Brandon** asks **Elinor and Mrs. Dashwood** if Marianne is engaged to Willoughby and tells them that he has feelings for her. Mrs. Dashwood says they must be engaged and tries to comfort Brandon, but Elinor says they do not know. After he leaves, she asks **Marianne**, who tells her there is no engagement, but she is certain that Willoughby loves her. She rejects the idea of marrying such an old, boring man as Col. Brandon.

*The Dashwood sisters travel to London, staying with relative. Willoughby does not call on them. Marianne writes him daily but receives no answer.*

Scene:

They meet **Lucy Steele** and she attaches herself to **Elinor**. **Marianne** is writing another letter to Willoughby so ignores the visitor. Lucy tells Elinor of her secret engagement to Edward Ferrars and swears her to secrecy, breaking Elinor's heart. The post arrives with a package of all her letters to Willoughby, an impersonal letter and returning the lock of hair.

*The Dashwood sister are invited to a ball. Marianne is sure Willoughby will be there. Elinor is afraid he may be.*

# DANCE

At the Dance:

**Elinor Dashwood:** fearful for her sister's health and comfort. Charmed to be able to dance with Edward, but leaves early to comfort Marianne after she is snubbed by Willoughby.

**Marianne Dashwood:** dances with Col. Brandon, but is distracted by looking for Willoughby. When he arrives she tries to speak with Willoughby, but he is with a lady he will soon marry and "cuts" her.

**Edward Ferrars:** Discouraged from spending time with the Dashwood sisters, but sneaks in a dance with Elinor.

**Col Brandon:** wishes to protect Marianne from Willoughby but dares not speak about what Willoughby has done.

# REST BREAK

## *SCENES FROM JANE AUSTEN'S LIFE*

### ACT 3

*Lucy and Edward's engagement is announced. Edward's parents are irate and disinherit him. He stands by Lucy.*

Scene:

**Marianne** tells Elinor the news about Edward, and Elinor confesses that she has known for some time. Marianne is devastated that her sister suffered so. **Colonel Brandon** arrives and speaks with **Elinor** alone to tell Edward Ferrars that he will offer him the parsonage on his estate. He tells Elinor the story of his ward Eliza, daughter of his beloved and his best friend who betrayed him. After her parents died, he raised her as his own. Everyone assumes she is his child. And Willoughby tried to seduce her.

Scene:

**Elinor** meets with **Edward** to tell him the good news about the parsonage. He is overcome with the kindness. They are both heartbroken.

*The Dashwood sisters return home. Marianne is despondent and grows ill with a terrible fever.*

Scene:

**Marianne** is in her sickbed. Her family tends to her and her suitors visit. **Brandon** brings his doctor, and is attentive at her bedside. Late at night, Willoughby arrives. Elinor dresses him down for how he has treated Marianne. He confesses that he does love her, despite everything. Elinor does not allow him to see her sister.

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## SCENES FROM JANE AUSTEN'S LIFE

### ACT 4

*Marianne recovers. She seems changed. More still and calm. Elinor tells her Col. Brandon's account, and what Willoughby said when she was ill.*

*Col. Brandon visits often and spend time with Marianne. Over time she responds to his kindness.*

Scene:

**Col. Brandon** asks **Marianne** to accept his hand. She says yes.

*The family waits with sadness to hear of the marriage between Lucy Steele and Edward Ferrars. One day they hear a second hand account that the wedding has taken place.*

Scene:

**Edward** visits **Marianne, Elinor and Mrs. Dashwood** alone, very shortly after they heard about the marriage. When Elinor congratulates him, he corrects her, letting them know that Lucy Steele has married his brother who had become the heir when Edward was disinherited. Elinor is overcome with emotion. The family gives them privacy and Edward proposes. Elinor accepts.

## ***SCENE FROM JANE AUSTEN'S LIFE***

# DANCE

**At the Dance:**

New couples enjoy each others company, mingle and dance and those of their acquaintances who have also found joy.

A feast is laid, bounty of the hunt.

Brides, collect your trousseau, gifts from your peers.

Jane Austen is a guest at this gathering. If there is time, find her to thank her for your sorrows and joys.



